



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPORT-HARVESTED MUSSELS QUARANTINE LIFTED ALONG CALIFORNIA COASTLINE, EXCEPT CHANNEL ISLANDS REGION

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced today that the statewide annual quarantine on mussels taken by sport harvesters from California's ocean waters ends at midnight on Monday, October 31, 2011.

Sampling of mussels has confirmed that shellfish-borne paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) toxins and domoic acid are at safe or undetectable levels with the exception of the northern Channel Islands region (Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands). The health advisory will remain in effect for mussels and other bivalve shellfish in this region. Also included in the continuing health advisory is the viscera or internal organs of small finfish and crustaceans like lobster and crab in the northern Channel Island region and the coastline of Santa Barbara County.

The annual mussel quarantine is issued for the entire California coastline, usually from May 1 through October 31. The quarantine applies only to sport harvested mussels. Commercially harvested shellfish are not included in the quarantine as other steps are taken to assure shellfish entering the marketplace are free of toxins.

PSP is a form of nervous system poisoning. Concentrated levels of the PSP toxins can develop in mussels and other bivalve shellfish when they feed on certain naturally occurring marine plankton. Domoic Acid Poisoning (DAP), sometimes referred to as Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning (ASP), has been linked to filter-feeding animals like bivalve shellfish. No known human cases of ASP have occurred in California this season.

CDPH issues warnings or quarantines when needed. Local health departments, various State and federal agencies participate in the monitoring program. Consumers can receive updated information about shellfish poisoning by calling the Shellfish Information Line at (800) 553-4133.

www.cdph.ca.gov

